

HB 262 -- SERVICE DOGS

SPONSOR: Sommer

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass by Consent" by the Standing Committee on Veterans by a vote of 13 to 0. Voted "Do Pass by Consent" by the House Consent and House Procedure Committee by a vote of 12 to 0.

This bill revises the term "service dog" to include a psychiatric service dog or mental health service dog that is trained to do work or perform tasks for an owner with a psychiatric disability, medical condition, or developmental disability recognized in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders.

This bill is similar to HB 1428 (2016).

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that this bill will help former servicemen and women who suffer from PTSD or elderly individuals with dementia or Alzheimer's. Service dogs help men and women suffering from PTSD while allowing them to engage with their families and participate in the world around them. Service dogs help individuals with dementia or Alzheimer's to get back to their homes safely. Service dogs provide a sense of security and are trained to help their owners cope with the effects of their disability or medical condition. These service dogs provide a valuable service not just to individuals suffering from psychiatric or developmental disabilities but also to their families and their communities.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Sommer; Dewey Riehn, VFW and MAVO; National Association of Social Workers - Mo Chapter; Mo Psychiatric Association; Pat Rowe Kerr; and Brian McNeil.

OPPOSERS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.